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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 003034

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/18/2013

TAGS: PGOV PREL AM AJ TU

SUBJECT: OSKANYAN-GUL MEETING RAISES HOPES OF LIMITED BORDER OPENING

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN ORDWAY FOR REASONS 1.5 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Foreign Minister Oskanyan told Ambassador that Turkish Foreign Minister Gul had indicated to him in a December 5 meeting that Turkey would open its border with Armenia to the two country's diplomatic passport holders as early as January 2004. The two foreign ministers also discussed regional security issues and Nagorno-Karabakh. End summary.

¶2. (C) Oskanyan informed the Ambassador that he expected the GOT to open the Armenian-Turkish border to each country's diplomatic passport holders as early as January 2004. During their December 5 meeting in Brussels, he and Foreign Minister Gul discussed the 15-point plan developed by the two sides and agreed on this first step. Oskanyan suggested that the GOT might slow the process following the December 16 vote by the Swiss parliament's passing an Armenian genocide resolution. He said that no agreement was in place to open the border to third country diplomats or tourists, but even the limited opening discussed by Gul would put in place the border crossing infrastructure required by a future broader opening. Oskanyan also stated that he had suggested a ceremonial that he and Gul meet at the border, but had received a non-committal answer.

¶3. (C) During a previous meeting, Anahit Harutunyan, the Head of the MFA's Turkey Section, confirmed that both sides agreed to move forward on the list of pre-established steps that could lead to full normalization of relations. According to Harutunyan, the first agreed step is the opening of the border for diplomatic passport holders and third country nationals. She said that Oskanyan and Gul had discussed the logistical requirements of such an action, and that Gul seemed more willing than in previous discussions to move ahead on this step without any other pre-conditions being met, such as progress in the Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations.

¶4. (C) Harutunyan said that Gul raised Nagorno-Karabakh within a broader discussion of regional security issues. Gul said Turkey wished to become "more decisively involved" in the settlement of the dispute, but did not elaborate on what actions the GOT would take.

ORDWAY